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The Dutch Reformed Church, and its Missions.

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THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH AND ITS MISSIONS.

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EARLY HISTORY.

In the providence of God the colonisation of South Africa was effected, not by Roman Catholic Portugal, which first discovered the Southern extremity of the continent, but by Protestant Holland. The early Dutch pioneers were not without a due sense of their responsibilities towards the native races among which they founded their first settlement in South Africa. The Dutch East India Company was formed in 1602, and to its initiative was due the erection of the "fortress of the Cape of Good Hope" just 50 years later. The Thirteenth Article of the Company's Charter contained the following provision: "At the most suitable places shall be stationed ministers and teachers, for the exhortation of the settlers, the advancement of the natives, and the instruction of the children of the latter, in order that the name of Christ may be extended and the service of the Company promoted." Nor was this article a dead-letter. To the honour of the Company it must be stated that they took great pains to supply their distant servants with regular spiritual ministrations, and even went so far as to establish in Holland a "Seminarium Indicum," at which young ministers for their colonial possessions could be trained. The Seminarium existed indeed for only ten years, but during that time it was served by men of great devotion and true missionary spirit, under whose influence the successful missions in Formosa and Ceylon were undertaken. One of its professors was Justus Heurnius, who maintained that "God had opened for the Netherlands the wealth of the Indies, in order to extend the Kingdom of Christ in the vast lands of the East."

The honour of first suggesting to the Company the establishment of a fort at the Cape belongs to two men who had suffered shipwreck in Table Bay. These two,

Janssen and Proot, memorialised the Company on the subject, pointing out the benefits which would accrue, and denying that any danger was to be anticipated from the natives. "By maintaining a good correspondence with them (they said) we shall be able in time to employ some of their children as boys and servants, and to educate them in the Christian Religion, by which means, if it pleases God to bless this good cause as at Tayouan and Formosa, many souls will be brought to God and to the Christian Reformed Religion."

The first Commander, Jan van Riebeek, landed here, as is well known, in 1652. He was a good man, according to his light, and a zealous servant of the Company. At the first meeting of the "Council of Policy," which directed the affairs of the little community, he recited a prayer which was subsequently used at the commencement of every gathering. In this prayer occur the words: "Since Thou hast called us to conduct the affairs of the East India Company here at the Cape of Good Hope, and we are now assembled that we may arrive at such decisions as shall be of most service to the Company, and shall conduce to the maintenance of justice and the propagation and extension (if that be possible) of Thy true Reformed Religion among these wild and brutal people, to the praise and glory of Thy name, we pray Thee, O most merciful Father, that Thou wouldest so enlighten our hearts with Thy fatherly wisdom, that all wrong passions, all misconceptions and all similar defects, may be warded from us, and that we may neither purpose nor decide ought but that which shall tend to magnify Thy most holy name."

Van Riebeek's attitude towards the natives was in accord with the sentiments expressed in the prayer. He issued strict injunctions that the Hottentots who came to the settlement were to be well received, and forbade under severe penalties all acts of violence or retaliation. An attempt was made by the "Sick-comforter" Wylant to

instruct some Hottentot children in the elements of reading and writing, but he was compelled to relinquish the idea, owing to their inveterate repugnance to a settled mode of life. Better success attended the efforts of Wylant's successor Van der Stael with the slave children. A school was opened for their instruction, and the Commander informs us in his Journal that he attended himself for the first few days in order to see that proper order and discipline were introduced. This school was subject to many vicissitudes. For long periods it was wholly closed, and the work seriously interrupted, but the principle that slave children were entitled to instruction in the elementary doctrines of Christianity and the rudiments of education, was never lost sight of. Both prudential and pecuniary reasons would suggest to the owners of slaves the necessity of inculcating religious and moral truths.

During the first three-quarters of a century more than 1,100 children and nearly 50 adult slaves were baptised into the Church of Christ. For the adults Christian baptism meant freedom, and for the children it secured at least the privilege of careful instruction in Christian doctrine and morals. The first recorded instance of emancipation by baptism was that of a certain Catharina, the daughter of a slave from Bengal. After her baptism she was known as "the honourable young woman," the same title being applied to the Commander's niece. Her hand was not long after sought in marriage by one of the Company's subordinate servants, and the ceremony which united them was celebrated in the usual way at the close of the Sunday morning's sermon. At that early stage there seems to have existed no "colour bar," and the only difference between white and black lay in their reception or non-reception into the Christian Church. A hundred years later matters stood on a very different footing. The law that slaves who had received Christian baptism were *ipso facto* free was subsequently repealed, as it was found to lead to grave abuses.

Apart from the education of slave children hardly anything was done by the colonists, for nearly a century and a half, to better the spiritual condition of the natives. A few individuals of the Hottentot nation were employed as servants by some of the most prominent colonists, and these in many instances received a Christian training. One of the earliest was the Hottentot girl named Eva, who after being baptised was married to a Dane called Meerhof. But no systematic attempt to evangelise the Hottentots was undertaken. The reasons for this neglect are not far to seek. The modern era of missionary zeal had not yet dawned. The Christian Church still looked upon men like Von Weltz and Elliot and the Moravians as visionaries. Its attitude was still that of the Lutheran divine who said: "As regards the heathen whom the missionaries would convert, they must not be such barbarians as Greenlanders, Laplanders and cannibals, who have nothing human but the human shape. Nor must they be cruel and violent men, who will suffer no stranger to come among them or consort with them. Before such dogs and swine we may not cast the pearls and holy things of God." It was not to be expected that the Christians of South Africa would be in advance of the Christian Church of Europe in zeal for the propagation of the Gospel among the aboriginal tribes.

There was, however, another, a local, reason for the apathy of the colonists towards the Hottentots. The state of spiritual destitution and neglect to which the settlement had fallen had by the middle of the 18th century become a matter of grave concern. Governor van Imhof, who made a tour of the country in 1743, found a population of between 5,000 and 6,000 scattered over an immense area, on more than 400 farms. To this large number only three ministers had been assigned, who were stationed at Table Bay, Stellenbosch and Drakenstein respectively. Many of the inhabitants were three and four days distant

from the nearest place of worship. Schools there were none in the outlying districts, and the children either ran wholly wild or received a fugitive instruction at the hands of some vagrant sailor or soldier. The moral and spiritual condition of the colonists was sufficiently serious for Van Imhof to seek the advice of the three ministers, and to determine upon the immediate erection of more churches and schools. From people who were themselves in so backward a state not much activity was to be looked for in the direction of evangelising the natives.

Even during the period when missionary enterprise was most completely relaxed, there were not wanting men whose hearts went out to the poor heathen. One of these was Petrus Kalden, who at the opening of the 18th century gave himself to the careful study of the Hottentot language, with the purpose—as he himself states—"of being of service to this heathen nation, who still abide in such dark ignorance, without knowledge of the true God, and strangers to the covenants of grace." Unfortunately this good man was compelled to return to Holland before he could give effect to his missionary intentions. An earnest plea for the instruction of the Hottentots was also presented by François Valentijn, who desired that the local clergymen should take the matter in hand. "For this salutary work, when once set in motion, will eventually make far better progress than is expected. Both as regards the Hottentots and as regards the Company's slaves, such a work is one of the greatest and most glorious enterprises which a clergyman could engage in, and his reward with God would be great."

Towards the close of the 18th century we notice the signs of awakening interest in missions to the slaves and heathen. For this revival of interest two men were in a special manner responsible —Pastors Van Lier and Vos. Helperus Ritzema Van Lier was a man of extraordinary natural talent as well as of deep piety. From his earliest years he loved study for its own sake. His marvellously tenacious

memory enabled him to retain everything that he read or heard. Languages, classical and modern, were his favourite subject of study, and subsequently History, Theology and the Oriental tongues absorbed his attention. Before the age of 18 he had written and upheld a treatise which gained for him the titles of Master of the Free Sciences and Doctor of Philosophy. At about this time occurred his conversion, and following closely on that came an invitation to proceed to the Cape. This invitation Van Lier accepted, and the remaining years of his short life were spent in Cape Town. Here he acquired unbounded influence over his flock. From the very commencement of his ministry he impressed upon them the necessity of engaging in active mission work, and on his initiative schools were started (or re-started) in Cape Town for the slaves, and mission work commenced among the Hottentots in the country districts. Van Lier's physical strength was small, but what little he possessed was willingly expended for his people and for the heathen around. Nor was his active pen quiet. For a theological dissertation the Hague Society awarded him a gold medal, and a scientific work on the various kinds of air was acknowledged by the Academy of Sienna with its membership and another gold medal. But Van Lier's course was nearly run. Growing weakness compelled him to take to his bed. Here he was visited by sorrowing parishoners and friends. From all,—from his beloved wife and children, from his devoted friends even from his slaves,—he took an affecting farewell, commending them to God in a prayer of great power. On the 21st March, 1793, this eminent servant of God entered into his rest. He was but 28 years old.

The work commenced by Van Lier was continued by the like-minded Michiel Christian Vos, who arrived in South Africa in the year after Van Lier's death. Vos was a South African born, who, by a series of curious and adverse circumstances, had been obliged to spend a great portion of his life in Holland. On receiving the appointment to

the charge of the Roodezand (now Tulbagh) congregation, he inaugurated his ministry by a sermon on the text: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," and declared his intention of proclaiming the Good News to Hottentots and slaves as well as to whites. Many of his auditors took alarm, but Vos' sincerity and earnestness disarmed their fears, and they were soon alive to their responsibility towards the slaves in their possession. At their request Vos prepared a brief catechism of the doctrines of the Reformed Church, of which copies were multiplied by hand and distributed to all the slave-owners, of the district. By this means masters were imbued with a new interest in the instruction and spiritual advancement of their slaves.

Contemporaneous with the new spirit of missions which had come to the Christians in South Africa was the general awakening of missionary interest in the Churches of Europe. In the year after Vos' arrival at the Cape the Baptist Missionary Society—the earliest of the great English Societies—was founded. Four years later, in 1799, the first missionaries of the London Society, Dr. Van der Kemp and his colleagues, reached Cape Town. Vos hastened from Tulbagh to meet and welcome them, and their stay in Cape Town was signalised by the establishment of the South African Missionary Society, the first Society of indigenous growth known in the sub-continent.

Dr. Van der Kemp brought with him a letter from the Directors of the London Missionary Society, which had then been in existence for four years. The Directors appealed to the Christians of South Africa to prosecute mission work vigorously. "Arise, brethren, we adjure you: unite for the attainment of these noble objects. The heathen who surround you call to you: 'Come over and help us.' You are situated in the vicinity of those parts which still lie wholly under the power of the prince of darkness, and near those habitations of cruelty

to which no ray of the Sun of Righteousness has yet penetrated. From feeble endeavours we have seen great issues arise." The whole of this letter was publicly read from the pulpits of the Dutch Reformed Churches. Christians were encouraged to organise themselves into an association for the advancement of the Kingdom of God. Thus it happened that, on the 22nd April, 1799, was established "Het Zuid Afrikaansche Genootschap ter bevordering van de Uitbreiding van Christus Koningrijk" (The South African Society for promoting the Extension of Christ's Kingdom).

The Constitution of the Society was embodied in 16 Articles, of which the first and fifth were unalterable. The first article ran thus: "The Object of this Society shall be to promote, by all means which lie within its power, the extension of Christ's Kingdom among the unenlightened in this Colony, and among the heathen both within and without its bounds." The fifth article shows how closely Church and State were still united in those years, and how little liberty of action religious associations yet possessed. "The attention of the Directors of this Society is most earnestly drawn to the general duty of every Christian to render all submission and reverence to the temporal power for the Lord's sake, and carefully to refrain from anything which may be repugnant to the rules that have been promulgated in things civil and ecclesiastical."

In consequence of the establishment of the South African Society, the work which was already being done in Cape Town for slaves and other neglected classes was organised and extended. At first only lay helpers were employed, but after some months the Directors obtained the services of the missionary Manenberg, who laboured with great devotion and success, until the unfriendly attitude of the Batavian Government obliged him reluctantly to resign. The chief functionary of that Govern-

ment, Commissary-General de Mist, seems to have been profoundly suspicious of the South African Society. He affirmed that its establishment meant the erection of a religious organisation alongside of the one already existing and by law established, namely the Dutch Reformed Church. He demanded that if they desired to engage in missionary operations, it should be beyond the colonial border, or at any rate at a distance of more than three days' journey from any village where a Dutch Reformed congregation was established. In spite, however, of opposition in high quarters, the new Society was accorded the hearty support of Christian friends. Funds were asked for and liberally given. The widow Möller subscribed £1,250. A site was purchased in Long Street, and on the 15th March, 1804, the new church building called "Het groote Oefeningshuis" (The large meeting-house) was opened for public worship by the senior Dutch Reformed minister, Rev. J. P. Serrurier.

The Society counted at this time some 500 members, many of them citizens of influence and considerable means. Offshoots of the parent society were soon established at Roodezand (Tulbagh), Stellenbosch, Wagonmaker's Valley (near Wellington), Graaff-Reinet, Paarl, and in Outeniqualand (now the district of George). Moreover, the Directors of the Society conducted an extensive correspondence with the London and Rotterdam Societies. They were in fact the local agents for those Societies. As regards the broad lines of policy and the choice of fields they had, of course, not much to say, but in the placing of workers and the grants of small sums of money for equipment, they were armed with pretty large powers. This agency for the London Society continued for nearly twenty years, until, indeed, the appointment of a local Superintendent—the first of them was Dr. Thom—made their mediation unnecessary. The South African Society also found the support of the first South Africans who volunteered for the distant mission fields. They were

Cornelius Kramer, of Tulbagh, who accompanied Kicherer to the Bushmen in 1799, and Kok, who was the earliest to proceed to the Bechuana (or Briquas, as they were then called) on the Kuruman River. These men, as well as others who could be mentioned, accomplished excellent work as assistants to the London and Rotterdam missionaries.

In 1817 the Directors of the South African Society procured a piece of ground in the district of Swellendam, (now the district of Ladismith,) where they commenced a work among the Hottentots. Zoar, as this place was called, was first worked by the missionary Joubert, who continued at his post for a long period, until the failure of crops so impoverished the people that he was compelled to resign. In 1837 the Directors secured the services of two Berlin missionaries, Gregorowski and Radloff, and for the next 16 years the station was worked by that Society. A dispute then arose about the introduction of an altar, crucifix and candles into the church. The Directors demanded that they should be removed, and the local superintendent agreed, but the board in Berlin refused to sanction the removal. The Station was accordingly taken back by the South African Society, while the adjoining station of Amalienstein was assigned to the German Society. Zoar is to-day a mission station of the Dutch Reformed Church.

No better idea of the nature of the work done by members of the Dutch Reformed Church at the end of the 18th and commencement of the 19th centuries can be given than by quoting a contemporary letter. In the year 1800 there was labouring at Wagonmaker's Valley a pious man named Van Zulch. His station was visited by the Rev. James Read, one of the earliest missionaries of the London Society, who in a letter to his Board in London, gives the following account of Van Zulch's work:—

"When he arrived at this place it resembled the valley of Ezekiel, full of dead bones. Both white and black,

both Christian and heathen, lived without God and without hope in the world. But being a man full of the Holy Ghost and faith he immediately set to work, and God laboured with him, so that they were soon compelled to build a meeting-house for the heathen, since their numbers increased rapidly, and many of them, whose hearts had been touched, were desirous after the salvation that is in Jesus.

"During the last year Van Zulch has been exceedingly weak, and he could only address the people now and then. He therefore requested the Society in Cape Town (the South African Missionary Society) to send them one of the first missionaries who might arrive from Europe. The poor heathen, seeing his weakness, and fearing that they were about to lose him, and be deprived of his instruction, ranged themselves around him and cried, with tears in their eyes: 'Would you leave us? Would you leave us? Who then will show us, ignorant and blind as we are, the way to heaven?' Until now the Lord has spared him, but I think that his end is near at hand. He is full of courage, and looks forward with longing, though also with submission to God's will, to the time of his departure.

"There are here about 300 heathen, chiefly slaves and Hottentots; of whom many not merely show signs of a true change of heart, but are even well established in their faith; and others evince a strong desire to be saved. We have gatherings with them on Sundays at one o'clock, also on Tuesdays and sometimes on Fridays, when opportunity offers. With the Christians we have meetings on Wednesdays. Many of the older people have been brought to the Lord by the preaching of Van Zulch, and some even by his conversations with the heathen. There is a great desire to hear the Word, but the faithful labourers are few."

THE COMMENCEMENT OF FOREIGN MISSION WORK.

In order fully to understand the attitude of the Dutch Reformed Church towards mission work at the commencement of the last century, it is needful to know somewhat of the internal conditions obtaining within the Church. Down to the close of the 18th century, the Colonial Church was nothing but an appanage of the Dutch Reformed Church in Holland. The colonial congregations stood under the jurisdiction of the Classis (Presbytery) of Amsterdam, and were by that Presbytery supplied with their ministers. The ecclesiastical independence of the Colonial Church was effected by an ordinance promulgated in 1805 by Commissary-General De Mist, on behalf of the Batavian Government, by which the Church was entrusted with the control of its own affairs, subject only to the approbation of the Colonial Government. This approbation was, however, very rigidly applied. Without the consent of the Government no congregation could be established, no minister appointed, no consistorial or other meetings held. At all meetings of the consistory (or kerkeraad) one or more political commissioners represented the government, exercised the right of veto, and transmitted the decisions to the recognized authorities, who might refuse to approve of them. When the first Synod of the Church assembled in Cape Town in 1824, two political commissioners took their seats as Government assessors and exercised the strictest control over the discussions. At the close of the Synod, Sir John Truter, the first commissioner, made a full report of the meeting to the Governor, which report, together with the decisions arrived at, were despatched to England to receive the formal assent of the King. There the matter was apparently forgotten, for no consent ever reached the Cape. Such were the difficulties with which in those days the Church had to contend.

That the Church, nevertheless, was not insensible of its duty towards the heathen is evidenced by the fact that in one of the earliest sessions of the Synod of 1824, a committee was appointed to consider the best means of organising mission work, and providing for the ordination of missionaries to the heathen. At first, however, nothing could be done, for the Church lacked a supply of ministers for its own congregations, and was in many cases obliged to borrow them from the London Missionary Society, or import them across the waters from Scotland. The Church was only freed from the incubus of State control in 1847, and that same year saw the appointment by the Synod of the first committee to direct and extend mission work within and without the Colony. From the minutes of the session of 21st October, we extract the following:—

> "The Praeses (Dr. P. E. Faure) enlarged at length on the unmerited reproach cast upon the Dutch Reformed Church, as though it were indifferent to the propagation of the Gospel, and did not concern itself about the spiritual interests of the heathen population of this Colony, the contrary of which the Right Rev. gentleman showed by the enumeration of several facts . . . The meeting was evidently permeated with the feeling and conviction that this General Assembly must adopt strenuous measures for the extension of the Kingdom of our Saviour, without as well as within this Colony. The Praeses hereupon proposed: 'That a Committee be appointed by the Synod for the promotion of the knowledge of the Gospel in this country, by the appointment of travelling missionaries in the various parishes'—which proposal was unanimously adopted."

At the next Synod, which met in 1852, this Committee were able to report that work had been commenced by missionaries Kretzen(at Zoar, subsequently at George), Keet (at Swellendam), Ter Burgh (at Plettenbergs Bay) and Noome (at Graaff-Reinet).

The work of evangelising the heathen could not at this time be very energetically pursued. The Church, as we have already said, had the utmost difficulty in supplying the spiritual needs of its own members. Ministers for the distant country congregations there were few, teachers still fewer. Before the congregations within the colony were properly organised and supplied, occurred the "Great Trek"—that most strange and romantic movement, of which the full history will probably never be told. Several successive Synods busied themselves with the problem of ministering to the religious needs of the trekkers. Periodical tours to the country north of the Orange and the Vaal were undertaken, congregations were established, but permanent ministers for those charges could not be found.

The Synod of 1857 marks a distinct point in the history of the Dutch Reformed Church and its mission operations. The "Committee for the Missionary Cause," as it was styled, (Commissie voor het Zendelings Wezen) brought in a somewhat dolorous report. There were no men, there was no money, they could effect very little—was in brief their plaint. This report was received with signs of obvious dissent, especially on the part of some of the younger members of the Synod. A Committee was appointed to discover some way by which mission work could be placed upon a sounder footing, consisting of the Revs. Albertyn of Caledon, Neethling of Prince Albert, Hofmeyr of Calvinia and Andrew Murray of Bloemfontein. Of these four only the last is still spared to us. They recommended that the Church should undertake a forward movement, and commence a new work somewhere in the north, "if possible on the confines of the congregation of Lijdenburg." This proposal almost took the breath away of some of the older members of the Synod, and with a curious smile upon his face, Mr. Van der Lingen, minister of Paarl, suggested that the four men who had introduced the courageous scheme, should be entrusted with carrying it out.

The need for more men to fill the pastorates of the Church had now become very clamant. One-third of the total number of charges stood vacant. The Theological Seminary of the Church was on the point of being opened, but some years must necessarily elapse before the supply of ministers from that institution could be anything like equal to the demand. It was therefore decided to depute Dr. Robertson, then minister of Swellendam, to seek for additional clergymen in Holland and Scotland. At the same time the newly constituted Committee entrusted him with the duty of finding missionaries who would proceed to the heathen, and thus inaugurate the foreign mission enterprise of the Church. Two men volunteered for this work, Henry Gonin, a Swiss, and Alexander McKidd, a Scotsman. They arrived at the Cape in 1861, and with their arrival the foreign mission work may be considered as fairly launched.

McKidd proceeded to the Zoutpansbergen in Northern Transvaal, where he laboured with great devotion, until after a brief period death put an end to his toil. He lies buried at the original station, Goedgedacht, at the foot of the lofty range of the Zoutpansbergen. He was succeeded by Stephanus Hofmeyr, a young man belonging to a well-known Cape Town family, who, after a somewhat careless youth, was converted, and at once proclaimed his intention of becoming a missionary. For thirty years he continued unremittingly at his post, preaching the gospel to the scattered white farmers as well as to the natives. A flourishing mission was established among the Sesuto-speaking natives of North Transvaal, and an equally successful work was inaugurated among the half-caste clan of Buyses—descendants of the notorious out-law Coenraad Buys (or de Buis), who at the commencement of the 19th century caused the Government much trouble and anxiety. Hofmeyr was an ideal missionary, patient, courageous, cheerful, with

a deep insight into the meaning of Scripture and an abounding love for his fellow-men, whether black or white. Apart from his eminent success as a missionary, he acquired immense influence over the white population of the Zoutpansberg district in a time when the ministrations of religion were few and far between. Through his faithful labours many were converted, and became warm supporters of his missionary undertakings. He died in 1905, and his work is now being continued in his spirit by his son-in-law, the Rev. J. W. Daniel.

Henri Gonin turned his attention to the Bakhatla tribe, who at the time were occupying the slopes of the Pilaansbergen, in the present district of Rustenburg, Transvaal. After a preliminary period of investigation, he settled down finally at Sauls Poort, at the extreme east of the Pilaansberg range, and some 50 miles north of Rustenburg. The progress of the gospel was at first but slow, and at the end of three years there were no more than three converts, one of whom had come from the Zoutpansbergen, and had heard the gospel message from the Boers among whom he had lived. In 1869 an event of considerable importance occurred. The Captain of the Bakhatla, Khamiyane, decided to remove with the major portion of his tribe, and to establish his chief kraal at another place beyond the Marico River. The spot chosen was called Mochudi, the "Place of Refuge." A great number of the Bakhatla, however, remained in the Pilaansbergen, and among them Mr. Gonin continued his missionising efforts with quiet perseverance. This faithful missionary is now the oldest, in time of service, of all the ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church. His long labours have been crowned with a large success. The tribe among whom he settled five and forty years ago has now become professedly Christian, and he himself can look back with gratitude and joy at the prolonged toil and happy results of the years spent in the Master's service.

When Chief Khamiyane moved off to the north, he was followed by a devoted and courageous young missionary named Brink. The country through which they passed was a *terra incognita*, overgrown with extensive forests and swarming with wild animals of every kind. Brink's labours lasted but a short time, when he too died, and was laid to rest in the little burial-plot not far from Mochudi village, which has since received the mortal remains of many another toiler in the Vineyard. His successor was missionary Beyer, during whose term of service Khamiyane's son Linchwe, who had succeeded to the chieftainship, professed Christianity, and was baptised. After Beyer's departure the work was continued by William Neethling, whose tragic death by the falling of the church's gable during a heavy storm, is still fresh in the memory of many. To Neethling succeeded Pieter Stofberg, a man of character, great ability and true piety, whose wife died at Mochudi, a victim to the prevailing malaria, while Stofberg himself succumbed to an insidious disease in 1907, when his influence was at its highest, and his friends anticipated for him many years of fruitful labours in the mission field. The work at Mochudi is now under the control of J. C. Knobel and D. J. Joubert.

Other mission fields in the Transvaal are Mabieskraal and the Waterberg. In the first of these J. P. Roux has done cautious and faithful work during the last quarter of a century, and in the latter, J. N. Murray has supervision of an extensive and important work among a number of scattered tribes and tribelets. On the whole the mission enterprises in the Transvaal and Bechuanaland, though handicapped by many serious difficulties through the proximity of the gold-fields and a corrupting civilisation, has yielded fruits which have gladdened the heart and strengthened the faith of the church which undertook them and the missionaries who carried them out.

THE MISSION TO MASHONALAND.

The commencement of mission work in Mashonaland is due to that eminent missionary and hero of faith, Stephanus Hofmeyr, of the Zoutpansberg. His eyes were turned continually northward towards the heathen tribes beyond the Limpopo River, and he eagerly desired to carry the Gospel to them. He made strong representations to the Mission Committee as to the claims of the Banyai—so the Mashonaland natives were slightingly called by their Matabele oppressors, the term signifying "dogs." But no missionary could be found to proceed to those remote regions, and Hofmeyr had to content himself with earnest intercession on their behalf, to which work he encouraged the Christians on his station also. For more than twenty years he engaged in this ministry of intercession before the way was actually opened for missionaries to settle among the Banyai.

Hofmeyr's first hope was centred in the late Dr. Dalzell of the Gordon Memorial Mission, who arrived at the Zoutpansberg in the search for a sphere of work where no other agency was yet in occupation. Hofmeyr urged him strongly to proceed to Mashonaland, but circumstances arose which made this impossible. In 1875 a serious attempt to reach the Banyai was made by the Paris Evangelical Mission, who were desirous of opening up a new field. Rev. Mr. Dieterlen accordingly set out with a party of native helpers, the country beyond the Limpopo being his objective. At Pretoria, however, he was detained by President Burgers, and, after prolonged consideration of his case by the Government, was prohibited from proceeding farther. This was a grievous disappointment to the Society, but, undeterred by the failure of the earlier attempt, Rev. François Coillard, one of the most devoted of South African missionaries, was deputed to endeavour a second time to reach the heathen populations in the then distant north. Coillard commenced his journey in 1877. At the Zoutpansberg he was heartily welcomed by Hofmeyr,

who rejoiced to think that his prayers on behalf of the Banyai were now about to be answered. He called his people together, explained the object of Coillard's expedition, commended it in fervent prayer to God, and at the close of the service asked for volunteers from among his converts to accompany Coillard on his perilous undertaking. Two of his best evangelists came forward, and Hofmeyr turned to his fellow-missionary and said: "Brother, they are the best I have, but I give them freely and heartily for the work among the Banyai."

His party thus augmented Coillard continued on his way, and after a difficult journey reached his goal. He had however reckoned without his host. To the west of Mashonaland lay the country of the Matabele, and their fierce chieftain, Moselekatse, exercised a tyrannical sway over the unfortunate Banyai. When he heard that white men had settled among them to teach them the elements of Christianity, he would none of it. Coillard was commanded to proceed at once to his kraal at Bulawayo, was peremptorily forbidden to labour among the Banyai, and after a heart-breaking detention of four months, was at length allowed to return to Basutoland. So ended the second attempt of the French brethren, as disastrously as the first.

For many years after this no attempt was made by white missionaries to enter Mashonaland. Hofmeyr's interest in the degraded Banyai however continued unabated, and he sent out some of his evangelists from time to time to sojourn among them for a time and then to return, before the suspicion and opposition of the Matabele chief had time to gather force. After the death of Moselekatse an attempt was made to obtain the permission of his son Lobengula for the establishment of a mission in Mashonaland, and Mr. Carnegie of the London Mission undertook to plead the cause of the Banyai, which he did with great earnestness. But Lobengula was immovable. "The Banyai," he said, "are my dogs: what do they want

with an *mfundisi* (teacher)?" With this answer the disheartened evangelists were obliged to return to the Zoutpansberg.

Not many months elapsed, however, before Mr. Rhodes acquired the right of entry into the dominions of Lobengula, and the Pioneer Force made their historical march through the heart of Mashonaland. This was conceived to be a favourable opportunity for renewing the hitherto frustrated missionary enterprise, and the Rev. S. P. Helm, who had been acting as coadjutor to Mr. Hofmeyr, set out on a tour of inspection. Accompanied by some native evangelists he proceeded as far as the Limpopo by wagon, and thence by pack-animal. In course of time they reached the vicinity of the Zimbabye ruins, and found the natives friendly and apparently sincerely desirous for a white missionary. The expedition returned to the Zoutpansberg to report favourably on the prospects of a mission among the despised Banyai.

In the course of the same year (1889) Helm was deputed to attend a meeting of Synod at Cape Town and to urge the claims of the Banyai mission. To such good purpose did he acquit himself of his task, that he was able to return in the following year with the consent of the Committee to occupy the new field, and with a young helper to assist him in the enterprise. This was A. A. Louw, who for a time had studied in the Theological Seminary at Stellenbosch, but who had been compelled by weak health to relinquish his studies. The real "trek" to Mashonaland was undertaken in 1891. Of this expedition Louw himself was the leader, with a layman, Eksteen, as his assistant, and a large number of native evangelists. Nine ox-wagons were necessary to convey the whole party with all the necessaries of life for a year. In two months time they reached the Zimbabye Ruins, and three miles from these the first station, Morgenster, (Morning Star), was established. Between Morgenster and the Limpopo the expedition had erected six out-stations, at each of which

an evangelist and his family had been stationed, so that a series of stepping-stones connected the new mission with the older one at the Zoutpansberg.

Both Helm and Eksteen were soon compelled to return to the south, and amid many difficulties and discouragements Louw prosecuted the work alone, until he was joined by Dr. J. T. Helm, a brother of the elder Helm. After the lapse of some years the number of the mission staff was augmented by the arrival of several other workers—Malan, Fouche, Hofmeyr, Hugo, Jackson, as well as by the addition of lady workers—Misses van Coller, Meyburgh, Slabbert, Fölscher and others. This accession to their ranks enabled them to establish new stations at Harawe, some 30 miles to the east of Morgenster, and at Pamoshana, about 60 miles to the north-east. The years 1903 and 1904 were years of much trial for the mission workers. No less than 15 of the staff either died of fever or were forced by failing health to leave the field, and it appeared as if there could be no thought of further extension. But though there was little opportunity to extend, the work gradually grew in intensive power, and in the hold which the missionaries were obtaining over the native mind and heart.

A remarkable extension of the field came to the Home Committee unsought in the year 1907, when the Berlin Missionary Society, which had been at work in Mashonaland almost as long as the D. R. Church, offered its sphere of work with three stations to the latter Church. This was viewed as a call of God to enlarge the place of our dwelling. The amount of £1750, for the properties the Berlin Society proposed to make over to the D. R. Church, was readily voted by the Committee, and an urgent appeal was made for workers. The response was very encouraging, and the losses by death and departure of 1903–4 were soon made abundantly good. At the end of 1909 it appeared that there were 21 labourers in the Mashonaland field, including women workers and Mission-

aries' wives, and that 9 stations and a large number of out-stations were being effectively occupied. The work in Mashonaland has now entered upon a very encouraging stage. The report to the Synod of 1909 showed that there were 281 baptized Christians, 129 members of baptism classes, and 1750 children in the schools.

THE NYASA MISSION.

In the year 1885 Dr. Andrew Murray undertook an evangelistic tour to the Transvaal, from which he returned with a deep impression of the great need and immense extent of the mission field. The work in the Zoutpansberg had then been in progress for twenty years, and in the meantime other societies had entered the Transvaal and hemmed in the Zoutpansberg work on every side. Dr. Murray was therefore of opinion that a new sphere of work must be sought in a field comparatively unworked. He suggested the neighbourhood of Lake Nyasa, where the two Churches of Scotland were at work, who would heartily welcome the arrival of a body of fellow-Presbyterians.

These ideas were first uttered in the midst of a small circle of ministers, who realised that if anything practical was to be undertaken, they must themselves take the initiative, and be willing to contribute largely out of their own pockets for the support of the new enterprise. At a Conference held at Cradock in 1886 the matter was further discussed, and a number of ministers undertook to give £10 per annum for the new mission. Before the end of the year the *Ministers' Mission Union* was finally established, and it is to this body that the inception of the Nyasa Mission is due. Meanwhile the first labourer for the distant field had offered his services to the Mission Committee of the Church. He was Andrew Charles Murray, a son of the Parsonage of Graaff-Reinet. Murray had almost completed his course in theology at the Stellenbosch Seminary, and now proposed to give 18 months to a brief

medical course in Edinburgh, for which place he sailed in September, 1886.

In 1888 Murray returned to the Cape. After ordination at Graaff-Reinet, and an impressive farewell service in the Adderley Street Church in Cape Town, he sailed for the mission field in June. The Chinde mouth of the Zambesi River had not then been discovered, and the port of disembarkation for Central African travellers was still Quilimane. From here Murray made his way, at the cost of much trouble and many mishaps, up the Kwakwa River, which at certain seasons of the year, immediately after the heavy summer rains, is connected with the Zambesi. This portion of the journey had to be performed in small boats, which, owing to the ineptitude of the native paddlers, were continually running aground on the numerous sandbanks which abounded in the shallow stream. After five days of journeying on the Kwakwa, a short stage of three miles had to be covered on foot in order to reach Vicente, a Portuguese trading station on the Zambesi. From here the progress was more rapid, as the tedious boats were exchanged for a river steamer, the "James Stevenson". At Katunga the overland trail to Blantyre was commenced, and after a week's detention, continued to Matope on the upper Shiré, whence the lake steamer carried passengers further, to the extreme north of Lake Nyasa.

Two months after his departure from South Africa Murray reached Bandawe, where he was heartily welcomed by Dr. and Mrs Laws. Here he hoped to mature his plans for the future. The chief problem to be solved was of course the choice of a sphere of work. Accordingly, a journey was planned to the north end of the Lake, to ascertain whether there was the promise of a suitable field among the Wankonde of that region. The tour of inspection was undertaken by Murray in conjunction with Messrs. Cross and Bain of the Livingstonia Mission. Ascending the mountain range they made their way to a native village some 40 miles westward of the Lake, and situated

upon the comparatively healthy plateau. Here it was determined to erect a station and commence a mission among the friendly Wankonde—one of the most manly of the Central African races, with clean huts, tidy villages, well-kept plantain groves and considerable herds of cattle.

The scheme of establishing a mission among the Wankonde could not, however, be carried out, owing first to the serious illness of Murray, who suffered so severely from sunstroke that his life was despaired of, the place of his interment chosen, and arrangements made for his funeral. Contrary, however, to Dr. Cross's expectations he recovered, and when convalescent, was removed by easy stages to the hospitable roof of Dr. Laws at Bandawe. During his stay here, and at the loftier and healthier station of Dr. Elmslie at Njuyu, he gradually recovered complete strength, and the idea of sending him out of the country was abandoned. In the meantime the war which had been undertaken by the English forces under Capt. Lugard against the Arab slave-traders in the north-west had dragged its slow length along. The Wankonde district was in a state of serious unrest. Occasional native raids still continued, and the lives and property of Europeans were insecure in the extreme. All these circumstances conspired to turn Murray's thoughts in another direction, and to suggest a search for a sphere of work in a part of the country less under Mohammedan influence than the far north-west.

In 1889 Murray was joined by his first lieutenant in the person of T. C. B. Vlok, and the two set out on an exploratory tour to the south, through the district now known as Central Angoniland. In November of that year the foundation was laid of the first Dutch Reformed Mission station in that country, which received the name of *Mvera* ("obedience"). The Achewa tribe which occupied this territory acknowledged the authority of Chiwere as chief of the country. We are speaking of a time when no protectorate had as yet been declared over the country, and Europeans could only settle there by favour of the chief.

The young missionaries accordingly found it advisable to establish their station as near as possible to the kraal of Chiwere, in order to claim his protection and win his confidence. Mvera is situated on a hill that commands a magnificent view of the Lake, 27 miles away, and of the range of mountains by which it is bounded on the east. As far as the eye can reach in a northerly direction stretch the sparkling waters of the Lake, over whose placid surface steam-boats now ply between Fort Johnston in the south and Langenberg in the extreme north, 360 miles away.

In 1892 Robert Blake joined the two already at work, while Murray journeyed to the Cape on his first furlough. When the latter returned it was not alone: his young wife, who had been Miss Lautré of the French Basuto Mission, accompanied him, along with Miss Jacobs, the fiancée of Blake, Miss Martha Murray, and J. S. Cridland who was to fill the offices of bookkeeper and carpenter. The number of workers had thus grown to seven, and the necessity of starting a second station was forced upon them. At a mountain called Kongwe ("the cold") there was abundance of running water, in which Mvera was unhappily somewhat deficient, and here Blake settled. Under his vigorous management a garden was laid out and a very serviceable mill, driven by water-power, was erected. Soon new workers arrived in the persons of Messrs. William Murray and A. v. d. Westhuysen, while Miss Martha Murray opened the first home for native girls. A third station was commenced in 1896, the site selected being under the lofty mountain called Mkoma. This station was established after the failure to effectively occupy the regions along the lake coast. The south and south-west coastline had been handed over to the Dutch Reformed Mission by their brethren of the Free Church of Scotland, and they felt it incumbent upon them to make a serious attempt to work the field, in spite of the known insalubrity of the climate, which had already carried off not a few members of the older Mission. Vlok and his young wife had accordingly

been sent to occupy Livlezi. The deadly nature of the climate again made itself felt, and in March, 1896, Mrs. Vlok's life was cut short by an attack of fever, to the intense grief of her husband and the great loss of the Mission. Her memory is commemorated by a tablet affixed to the wall of the church at Mvera, bearing this inscription:

ANATIRA MOYO WAKE NGATI NSEMBE KUDZIWITSA ANYANJA KUKONDA KWA KRISTU.

(She poured out her life as an offering to make known to the Anyanja the love of Christ). After his wife's death Vlok removed to the plateau, and commenced work at Mkoma, where he continues to labour with untiring devotion to this day.

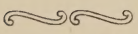
The work, however, claimed more sacrifices than one. In the year after Mrs Vlok's death, J. F. du Toit, who had also contracted fever in the unhealthy lowlands, succumbed to an attack of blackwater fever at Mkoma. In 1898 Cridland died, just as he was preparing to return home for his first furlough. Three years later S. McClure, who had joined the Mission as artisan missionary, succumbed to an attack of fever after four years of faithful work. Again, in 1904, C. Minnaar, who had decided for mission work while a prisoner in the Boer Camp at St Helena, died unexpectedly at Mkoma, after completing a substantial and handsome church, which for many years will remain the monument of his industry and consecration. Finally reference must be made to the death of Tinie Pauw, wife of J. P. J. Joubert, who died at Chiromo before she had even reached the field of work where she hoped to contribute the share of a missionary's wife towards the promotion of Christ's Kingdom in Central Africa. The above is the roll of faith-heroes in the history of the Nyasa Mission.

The growth of the Nyasa Mission during the past ten or twelve years has been nothing short of marvellous. With the exception of Uganda, there is perhaps no part of the modern mission field which shows such growth as the fields

of the Livingstonia and Dutch Reformed Missions in Central Africa. The extension of the work during the last decade can be best exhibited thus:—

	In 1900.	In 1910.
Number of European workers (including wives)	23	37
Number of Stations manned by Europeans	3	8
Number of outstations	80	235
Number of evangelists and teachers	330	865
Number of children at school ...	7,839	25,796
Number of baptised Christians ...	340	2,029
Number of members of baptism-class	579	3,139

This is a record of growth for which we may well thank God and take courage. It must be clearly stated here that the above figures take no account of the promising field of the Dutch Reformed Church of the Orange River Colony. That work was commenced in 1899, and now counts 5 stations manned by 13 Europeans, 324 native workers, and over 9,000 children under instruction. The Transvaal Church has also lately undertaken mission work in Central Africa, and has selected as its field Portuguese Nyasaland, immediately to the south of the territory worked by the Dutch Reformed Church of Cape Colony.



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